

have developed a great deal of respect I did not have. The reason is that even though there are only 100 of us, on most occasions we do not work on a very close basis. We come through and vote, have committee hearings, and hear each other talk, but here we had no alternative but to sit down in the trenches and try to work out tremendous differences that we began with. We were able to do that.

Legislation is the art of compromise. Had Senator INHOFE stuck to his guns and I stuck to my guns, we would not have a bill. That is nothing bad. That is what legislation is all about, consensus building. I deeply appreciate the ability I have had to get to know my friend from Oklahoma much better.

I express my appreciation, of course, to my counterpart on the subcommittee, Senator BOND. I appreciate his good work. They both have excellent staffs. I have gotten to know them also.

Of course, Senator JEFFORDS and I, everyone knows of our close and longstanding relationship and how much we care about each other. I appreciate very much his work on this bill and his allowing me a little bit of freedom on a bill that normally but for the closeness of our relationship would not have occurred.

The other Senators have spoken about their staffs and how much they appreciate them and that they would submit the names for the RECORD and they ran off a lot of names. I have one staff person. No one knows this bill better than he does. No one knows the numbers better than he does. I am so well served by J.C. Sandberg. I appreciate so much the tireless efforts on his behalf. He was up until 3 in the morning this morning, last night, and many nights during the past 6 months. He has worked very long hours. I wish I could rattle off the names of lots of other people who worked with me on this bill, but the only person who did great work on my staff was J.C. Sandberg, which was exemplary. Not only has he rendered great service to me and the people of the State of Nevada, but I believe this entire country.

Also, my legislative director, Lisa Moore, has done good work. She has been around all the time helping J.C. and helping me, and I want her to know how much I appreciate her good work.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DIVERSITY VISA LEGISLATION

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to

fix a problem some of my colleagues have experienced in serving their constituents. Immigration case work is one of the top issues my State offices handle on a regular basis. Occasionally, people who are in the country legally and playing by the rules can slip through the cracks as they wait on the immigration process to run its course. With the massive caseload handled by Immigration Services, there are bound to be mistakes and this legislation allows the agency to remedy those mistakes in the limited situation of the Diversity Visa Program.

The case of an Atlanta couple, Charles Nyaga and his wife Doin, recently came to my attention. Charles Nyaga, a native of Kenya, came to the United States with his family as a student in 1996. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in divinity.

In 1997, he applied for the fiscal year 1998 Diversity Visa Program and the Immigration and Naturalization Service selected him. In accordance with the diversity visa requirements, Nyaga and his wife submitted an application and a fee to adjust their status to legal permanent resident. A cover letter on the diversity visa application instructed Mr. Nyaga as follows:

While your application is pending before the interview, please do not make inquiry as to the status of your case, since it will result in further delay.

During the 8 months the INS had to review his application, Mr. Nyaga accordingly abided by what the INS told him to do and never made any inquiry. He unfortunately never heard back. His valid application simply slipped through the cracks because at the end of the fiscal year Mr. Nyaga's application expired, although a sufficient number of diversity visas remained available.

Mr. Nyaga and his wife took their case all the way to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. In a decision last year, the court found that the INS lacks the authority to act on Mr. Nyaga's application after the end of the fiscal year, regardless of how meritorious his case is. The court even went so far as to note that a private relief bill is the remedy for Mr. Nyaga in order to overcome the statutory barrier that prohibits the INS from reviewing the case in a prior fiscal year. The U.S. Supreme Court recently refused to take up the case.

My legislation would overcome this statutory hurdle for Charles Nyaga, his wife, and others who are similarly situated. The legislation would give the Department of Homeland Security the opportunity to reopen cases from previous fiscal years in order to complete their processing. The bill would still give the Department of Homeland Security the discretion to conduct background checks and weigh any security concern before adjusting an applicant's status.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and with homeland security officials to pass this legislation this

year. We must provide relief in these cases. I believe this targeted legislation strikes the proper balance to provide thorough processing of diversity visa applications while not compromising the Department's national security mission.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise this evening to introduce an important piece of legislation called the Guard and Reserve Enhanced Benefits Act of 2004. This bill is at the desk.

I ask unanimous consent to add the following cosponsors: Senator LEAHY and Senator REID of Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2068 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). The Senator from Rhode Island.

THE STATION NIGHTCLUB FIRE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to recall one of the most tragic events in the history of the State of Rhode Island. It was almost 1 year ago, on February 20, 2003, that a devastating fire destroyed the Station nightclub in West Warwick, RI, killing 100 people and injuring nearly 300 more. The impact of this horrific incident on our small State is beyond measure, as most Rhode Islanders either suffered a direct loss, or knew someone who died or was injured in this blaze.

The first anniversary of the fire will bring back painful memories for many in our community. I want to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who perished and to let them know that our thoughts and prayers remain with them and with the survivors who continue to struggle with the physical and mental toll of this horrible event.

Looking back on the West Warwick fire and its aftermath also reminds us that it brought out the best in our people. In the first minutes and hours of this tragedy, our firefighters, police, and emergency medical personnel performed heroically under terrifying circumstances, as did many of the patrons who were at the scene and helped to save others. Nearby small businesses like the Cowesett Inn restaurant were turned into triage centers, and first responders from throughout southern New England descended upon West Warwick to do whatever they could to help.

I visited victims at all of our hospitals and in Boston as well. I was inspired by their courage and the extraordinary skill and compassion of countless doctors, nurses and health professionals.

As our Nation continues to fight the war on terror, the response to the West Warwick fire provides a good illustration of the progress we have made—and